

HOUSE RESOLUTION 37

By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to recognize and commend Shirley Sherrod for her honorable and astute service to the people of the United States.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Sherrod is one such laudable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, a consummate public servant and dedicated civil rights leader, Ms. Sherrod has distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to her community and this great Nation; and

WHEREAS, born in Oklahoma in 1948, Shirley Sherrod was raised on a farm in rural Georgia; and

WHEREAS, when her beloved father was shot by a white farmer in a dispute over livestock and an all-white grand jury refused to indict the perpetrator, an intrepid, seventeen-year-old Shirley Sherrod decided to devote her life to ensuring that African-American farmers achieved racial equality and propelling this great nation into an even more just and equitable democracy; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Sherrod earned her undergraduate degree from Albany State University and her master's degree in community development from Antioch University Midwest, all the while working assiduously to promote civil rights with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Southwest Georgia Project; and

WHEREAS, upon graduation, Shirley Sherrod and her husband co-founded and expertly directed New Communities, Inc., an African-American communal farm project in Lee County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, this remarkable woman lent her time and tremendous talents to the non-profit organization, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, developing a program of outreach, education, and technical assistance for family farmers in need; and

WHEREAS, committing her singular skills to ensuring that underprivileged families remained in their homes and on their farms, Ms. Sherrod worked tirelessly with singer Willie Nelson and his Farm Aid Project to positively impact the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of families throughout South who were struggling with income inequities; and

WHEREAS, spearheading a class action lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture, Ms. Sherrod recovered millions of dollars to compensate farmers who had suffered from racial discrimination at the hands of the federal government; and

WHEREAS, because of her proven leadership capacity and unparalleled commitment to the agricultural community, Shirley Sherrod was named the Georgia State Director of Rural Development for the U.S.D.A. in 2009; and

WHEREAS, on July 19, 2010, when a blogger posted only a small portion of a speech she had delivered at a NAACP event, Ms. Sherrod found herself in the middle of a political firestorm, and she was derided, and removed from her post; and

WHEREAS, after the entire speech was revealed, it became clear that hers was a moving story of overcoming prejudice and the importance of avoiding racism of any kind, including reverse discrimination; Ms. Sherrod was fully exonerated with apologies from everyone involved, including from the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Sherrod's remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to her reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Sherrod is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby

commend Shirley Sherrod for her honorable and astute service to the people of the United States, salute her unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction, and extend to her our best wishes for every continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.